

Message Text

SECRET

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S E C R E T NEW DELHI 4686

NODIS

E.90. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR TECH MNUC IN
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT'S NUCLEAR POLICY STATEMENT

REF: NEW DELHI 4381

1. FOREIGN SECRETARY MEHTA ASKED ME TO JOIN HIM, INDIAN ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION CHAIRMAN SETHNA, AND MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS SECRETARY VELLODI TO DISCUSS THE PRESIDENT'S NUCLEAR POLICY STATMENT OF APRIL 1. THEIR CONCERNS TURNED OUT TO BE NOT SO MUCH RELATED TO THE PRESIDENT'S GENERAL PROPOSALS AS TO GOI PROBLEMS REGARDING TARAPUR. THEY SEEM TO BE WORRIED ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF EXTENDED DISCUSSIONS ON GENERAL POLICIES FOR FINDING AN EARLY WAY TO KEEP TARAPUR IN OPERATION. IN PARTICULAR, SETHNA ONCE AGAIN SET FORTH IN DETAIL THE CONDITION OF STORAGE POOLS FOR SPENT FUEL WHICH HE SAID WOULD BE FILLED BY OCTOBER, A CONDITION WHICH WOULD FORCE HIM TO CUT TARAPUR OPERATION EVEN IF ADDITIONAL NUCLEAR FUEL IS SUPPLIED.

2. I REPLIED THAT THE USG WAS FULLY AWARE OF BOTH THE STORAGE AND FUEL SUPPLY PROBLEMS CONCERNING TARAPUR. I EXPLAINED THAT WHILE BROAD GENERAL POLICY QUESTIONS WERE BEING CONSIDERED IN WASHINGTON, SPECIAL ATTENTION
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WAS ALSO BEING GIVEN TO THE SPECIFIC ISSUE OF TARAPUR IN VIEW OF THE EARLY DEADLINES REGARDING FUEL SUPPLY AND STORAGE.

3. WHILE MOST OF THE GOI PRESENTATION(SETHNA DID MOST OF THE TALKING) WENT OVER GROUND ALREADY WELL KNOWN TO THE DEPARTMENT REGARDING TARAPUR REQUIREMENTS,THE

INDIAN SIDE RAISED A FEW QUESTIONS REGARDING THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT. THEY POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, THAT THESE WERE ONLY INFORMAL QUESTIONS AS THEY HAD NOT YET GONE TO THE POLITICAL LEVEL FOR OFFICIAL VIEWS (THE NEW FOREIGN MINISTER HAS BEEN IN OFFICE FOR ONLY THE LAST SEVERAL DAYS). VELLODI, FOR EXAMPLE, ASKED ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE PRESIDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT FOR INDIAN PROGRAMS IN THE AREA OF PLUTONIUM REPROCESSING, PEACEFUL NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS, THE USE OF PLUTONIUM IN THE INDIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM AND FAST BREEDERS. THE FOREIGN SECRETARY ASKED WHAT COULD INDIA DO ABOUT PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES TO WHICH IT HAD DEVOTED RESOURCES AND WHICH MIGHT BE AFFECTED BY POLICIES FALLING FROM THE PRESIDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT. I REPLIED THAT THE PRESIDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT WOULD HAVE IMPLICATIONS FOR SOME OF THESE MATTERS AND I BELIEVED THAT MORE SPECIFIC QUESTIONS SUCH AS THESE WOULD BE ADDRESSED AT A LATER STAGE.
SCHNEIDER

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